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Annual Overview Report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination for 1999

Summary

The present report provides an overview of the work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and its subsidiary bodies in 1999.

The report outlines major trends in the work of ACC during 1999, focussing on inter-agency coordination efforts to enable the system to meet coherently and effectively the challenges of the twenty first century, and on responses to specific requirements of intergovernmental bodies. In that context, the report elaborates upon efforts to strengthen the dialogue between ACC and the central intergovernmental machinery, particularly ECOSOC.

The report reviews major policy issues examined by ACC, including the institutional and programmatic capacity of the system to address the challenges of globalization and the system's interactions with the private sector and especially highlights the efforts of the system in support of a sustained and integrated follow-up to UN global conferences and summits of the 1990s.

The report stresses that poverty eradication and the objective of promoting equity and equality, at both the national and international levels, should continue to be the over-arching goals that should guide ACC in contributing to the development of a focussed global agenda, based on the outcomes of global conferences.

The promotion of peace and sustainable development in Africa continued to be a major theme in the work of ACC during 1999. In addition to reviewing progress in enhancing the coordination of UN system's activities in Africa, the report provides, as recommended by CPC, information on over-all trends in aid flows to Africa.

Also as requested, the report provides information on assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the UN Charter. Finally, the report addresses administrative questions focussing on staff security and safety concerns.

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1. Introduction

1. As the UN system enters a new century and equips itself to address the challenges of globalization, the content and purpose of inter-agency coordination are taking on a new policy significance, and a new, central place in the policy concerns and initiatives of the organizations comprising the system.

2. Globalization is bringing the UN system together in an unprecedented way, both in meeting the many difficult challenges it has introduced and in ensuring that the benefit it carries and the great potential it offers can be enjoyed by all. The need for complementarity and stronger partnerships in responding to the new demands that globalization poses for national and international systems is pervading not only the central inter-governmental and inter-secretariat processes, but, increasingly, policy development and strategic planning in each and every organization of the system.

3. The system has gone a long way from perceiving inter-agency coordination simply as a matter of avoiding duplication and achieving administrative savings – although of course an effective division of labour and maximizing the impact of scarce resources remain basic objectives. For a long time now, the substantive purpose of inter-agency coordination, as a key means of ensuring that all sectors impinging on development are effectively integrated in support of global strategies, has been well established. The global conferences of the 1990s represented in many ways the culmination of the effort, pursued through successive Development Decades, to agree on cross-sectoral goals and global strategies around which all parts of the system would rally. All agencies found it both possible and directly relevant to their objectives to contribute to these events, and both the preparatory and the follow-up processes were in a very real sense owned by the system as a whole.

4. While the promotion of a sustained and integrated follow-up to these conferences remains central to the system's coordination effort, yet a new phase in inter-agency cooperation, spurred by the imperatives of globalization, is now emerging. A main feature of this phase is that the spirit of system-wide mobilization that characterized the global UN conferences of the 1990s is progressively being extended to the main conferences and other negotiating processes being undertaken by individual organizations and agencies, which are increasingly being viewed as building blocks – larger or smaller but nonetheless integral parts – of the broader edifice of improved international governance needed to respond effectively to the challenges of globalization. The same applies to many of the new major programme initiatives launched by the various agencies, which, almost invariably now, involve partnerships with groups of other concerned UN organizations, as well as alliances with the private sector and civil society organizations.

5. This is so because, as the system deepens its understanding of the many dimensions and implications of globalization and their inter-relationships, the realization is growing than meeting the challenges ahead requires both a new and better balance between economic, social and environmental objectives, and mutually reinforcing initiatives and concurrent progress on a large number of fronts.

6. Thus, implies a deliberate effort to build on the main instruments and mechanisms that exist within the system for addressing inter-related dimensions of globalization, as part of a coherent, system-wide strategy based on a clear understanding of how the respective mandates, instruments and comparative strengths of the various organizations can advance the various elements of the global agenda in a mutually supportive way. There is also an expanding and deepening consensus within the system on the crucial importance of engaging civil society, including the business community and trade unions, to build broad-based support for the goals of multi-lateral cooperation in a globalized environment.

7. The need to define a positive agenda - not to hide or dismiss the problems of globalization but to promote a better balance between its various dimensions and to help introduce a sense that, if managed properly, globalization can be a powerful force for human progress – is proving to be a strong element for renewed unity of purpose within the system. In this perspective, the system is uniting to address the twin challenge of integration confronting the international community as a result of globalization: first, the integration of developing countries to participate effectively in the global trading system; and second, the integration of the economic sphere at all levels – global, regional and national - with the social, cultural and environmental spheres. A strong awareness is deepening within the system

that UN organizations and agencies can only meet this twin challenge through solidarity and concerted approaches which enable organizations to tap into each other's constituencies and serve to broaden support for common core values and objectives.

8. It is now clear that globalization is much more than an economic phenomenon. It has implications ranging from the application of human rights and labour standards to the management of the environment and the way in which population movements are addressed. It poses major challenges, from counteracting the spread of diseases to combating the expansion of criminal networks. Each organization has its own constituency and individual voice and was mandated to international cooperation. But a strong awareness is deepening that only by working together and taking advantage in a concerted way of all the negotiating instruments and outreach mechanisms available to it, can the UN system tackle the overall challenge of globalization and help make it work for the world's people.

9. In these new circumstances, the work of ACC, and effective policy guidance by the central inter-governmental bodies, take on a new importance. The new circumstances also imply, however, that the reports of ACC, if they are to give a real sense of substantive progress in inter-agency coordination and system-wide coherence, cannot be confined, as in the past, to an account of discussions at the regular sessions of ACC and of activities of its standing subsidiary bodies. They must, to do so, also provide a concise but comprehensive picture of policy developments in individual UN organizations that impinge on system-wide objectives. And they must provide an overview of partnership initiatives that, although not in all cases launched by ACC as such, are being pursued within the framework of broad approaches set by the Committee and serve to advance inter-agency strategies elaborated by the Committee, pursuant to policy directives by the relevant inter-governmental bodies.

10. These approaches are in line with the invitation addressed by ECOSOC to ACC in its resolution 1999/66 to "consider ways in which its annual reports can contribute to ... bringing to the attention of the Council, in a timely manner, major developments in United Nations agencies and organizations of system-wide interest..." Thus, with the Council's concurrence, a new format for the ACC annual reports along the lines outlined above, will be initiated beginning with the report covering the year 2000. The new format will be complemented by timely, factual reporting on the outcomes of individual ACC session following each Committee session. In the same context, ACC welcomes the Council's initiative to meet with the heads or representatives of individual or clusters of agencies, so that the Council can be appraised in a timely way of policy developments in various areas of the work of the system that are relevant to its system-wide Charter responsibilities.

11. In the first instance, the present report, while still based on the established format and mandate, endeavors to provide a more analytical, issue-oriented account of the main activities of ACC and its subsidiary machinery during 1999. Such an account is complemented by illustrations of major new initiatives underway within the system that are aimed at strengthening inter-agency partnerships as well as partnerships with other development actors, and are geared to strengthening the capacity of the system to respond effectively to the new challenges before the international community in the face of globalization.

2. Enhancing Interactions between ECOSOC and ACC

12. The past two years have witnessed a substantial strengthening of the dialogue between ECOSOC and ACC. They have also been characterized by an intensive process of revitalization of the Council itself and a more effective and participatory exercise by the Council of its coordination functions; and a parallel strengthening of AC's leaderships role within the system, including in bringing the system together in support of inter-governmental policy making.

13. These processes are mutually supportive, and are both being strengthened by the enhanced dialogue underway. They reflect a growing and deepening realization - which is taking roots in a parallel and mutually reinforcing way at both the inter-governmental and the inter-secretariat levels – of the need for concerted responses to challenges of globalization and inter-dependence. This need is, in turn, providing a new and stronger substantive under-pinning for the work of both ECOSOC and ACC, and for the intensified dialogue and cooperation that is taking place between them, leading to a sharper institutional and policy focus on critical issues.

14. A prerequisite for intensified dialogue and cooperation is a timely flow of information. During the year, the Secretary-General, in his capacity as Chairman of ACC, addressed the

Council in February 1999 and this briefing was followed by a dialogue session, in March, between the Secretary-General and ECOSOC on the work of the ACC. The Council and its Bureau were subsequently briefed on the outcomes of the Spring and Fall sessions of the Committee. These briefings, supplemented by written notes, and interactions with Council members will be further expanded in the future. They have been accompanied by briefings by agencies or groups of agencies on issues within their mandates or on which they are serving as lead organizations within the ACC machinery, which will also further be intensified in the future. A Website (acc.unsystem.org) has now been established that enables delegations and the public to access information on the work of ACC on an on-going basis.

15. With regard to substantive issues on the Council's agenda, the preparations and deliberations of ECOSOC in 1998 on market access, and in 1999 on employment and poverty eradication, have been based on the most active and close involvement of the organizations of the system.

16. In turn, the Ministerial Communiques adopted by the Council and other resolutions and agreed conclusions resulting from the Council's work were brought to the attention of the governing bodies of the organizations of the UN system by the President of ECOSOC and are being actively followed-up at the secretariat level. The on-going practice of submitting to the Council reports on the implementation of ECOSOC agreed conclusions is equally being reinforced.

17. Inter-agency support for the work of the ECOSOC functional commissions has traditionally been a key concern of the work of the ACC machinery, and interactions have been further intensified in the recent period in connection with the preparations for the 5-year reviews of the UN global conferences of the 1990s. In addition to contributing to the implementation of the outcomes of each of the conferences, and cooperating in reviews of their follow-up, ACC has been giving growing attention to supporting the effort – led by ECOSOC – to promote their integrated implementation and coordinate follow-up action on major themes cutting across the outcomes of these conferences. This policy objective is gaining momentum and is perhaps the effort around which the cooperation and dialogue between ECOSOC and ACC have been most intensive and fruitful in the recent period. Developments in this respect are dealt with in section 4 below.

18. The increasingly inclusive and participatory strategy pursued by ECOSOC in performing its coordinating role in this and other key areas of inter-agency concern has greatly strengthened the place of ECOSOC in the system, and is serving to broaden and deepen support for its policy guidance. The Council's effectiveness in this respect will be increasingly crucial in the effort to harness the forces of globalization in support of economic and social progress.

3. Meeting the challenges of globalization

19. Throughout 1999, ACC conducted a wide-ranging process of reflection on the demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment, focusing on the collective capacity of the system to respond in a flexible and effective manner to the new challenges facing it. The process built on the outcome of the review of the reform processes underway in the system, on which ACC focused during 1997 and 1998, and was projected towards contributing to the Secretary-General's preparations for the Millennium Assembly, an event which – ACC hopes – will renew political support for the principles of multi-lateralism that the UN and its agencies represent, and constitute a turning point in strengthening the UN system.

20. The process was launched at a "retreat" that ACC held in April 1999 and was pursued at the Fall session, focusing on institutional implications. ACC members sought, in the first instance, to elaborate the shared values that define the common identity of the system and to identify, in that light, the main gaps confronting it, as its enters a new century. The discussions showed that the key challenges before the system in closing these gaps revolved around three central issues. First, the system's own contribution to effective international governance, adapted to the new requirements and circumstances. Second, the contribution that the system can make to bring the benefits of globalization to peoples and countries left out. And third, the basic capacity of the system to promote and strengthen the rule of law globally.

21. Executive Heads also carried out a critical assessment, not only of the strengths, but also of the weaknesses of the UN system in relation to these challenges. The strengths of the system included: universality: in terms of the scope of its membership, the range of its functions, its multicultural character and its capacity to give

voice to the concerns of all; credibility and moral authority; value-based orientation, underpinned by knowledge, giving expression and operating according to principles and acting for the common good; and convening power which enables the system to contribute to global agenda-setting, and to serve as generator of normative standards and as a vehicle of international cooperation for their attainment. The weaknesses included: the system's inability to fully exploit the sources of its own strength; insufficient coherence in setting goals; and in implementing initiatives and in monitoring the realization of agreed plans and targets; and a certain propensity to be crisis-driven, that is to say, the reactive nature of the system.

22. In the light of the above, Executive Heads defined a number of areas for common action: (a) contributing to more inclusive mechanisms for responding to global challenges and for dialogue among multi-stakeholders; (b) helping to build capacity in developing countries to enable them to participate more proactively in setting the global agenda for international dialogue; (c) devising more effective partnerships within the system, including through issue-based networks, and forging deeper relations with civil society; and (d) establishing result-oriented action plans with clear and achievable targets, measurable country-level goals and implementable monitoring, evaluation and reporting procedures.

23. ACC reached three broad conclusions with respect to areas of common action and as guidance for further inter-agency work. Firstly, there is a need to set clear goals and to work towards them collectively, with clear benchmarks to measure the results of cooperative initiatives. ACC stressed that the commitments made, and targets set at recent global conferences must be brought together to provide an engaging common agenda for the future work of the system. In this context, it expressed appreciation for the leadership that ECOSOC has been providing in this direction. Secondly, the key issue of the mobilization of resources, to overcome a major and growing constraint, in promoting the global agenda. And thirdly, cutting across these two basic concerns, the need, in this era of globalization, to forge new partnerships and strategic alliances with other stakeholders, based on UN values, to achieve global objectives. In this regard, ACC devoted a great deal of attention to initiatives underway within the system, such as the Roll Back Malaria Initiative of WHO, and the Elimination of Urban Slums Initiative of the World Bank, and to examining how they could best be reinforced and supported by the system as a whole.

24. ACC recognized that the process of promoting coalitions involving a broad range of actors, far from placing the UN system in a marginal role, can and should entail a key role for the UN system in identifying public policy issues that require a global commitment. A pre-condition for the UN system to play that role is its ability to set and rally around clear goals and priorities.

25. With respect to its role in deepening the analysis of the impact of globalization and in identifying areas where the organizations of the system have mutually reinforcing contributions to make, ACC placed particular emphasis on harnessing information and communications technologies in support of sustainable development.

26. In addressing recent policy developments in the organizations of the system and in the context of its overall discussions on the capacity of the system to respond to new challenges, ACC focussed on the link between poverty eradication and social development on the one hand, and the expanded Highly Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) debt initiative on the other. This link was seen as providing a new important basis for more purposeful collaboration between the Bretton Woods Institutions and other agencies and UN programmes at the global and national levels. The discussion brought out the common interest of ACC members to work together so that the initiative contributes substantially to the strengthening of social services and antipoverty programmes. ACC also stressed the need to support governments concerned to put in place the governance structures and economic and social policies that will enable them to draw maximum benefit from the HIPC initiative. It stressed that the opportunity of the initiative should be seized to refocus policies and programmes on human-centered development. Especially important was to ensure that the magnitude of the demands on financial resources involved in the initiative does not erode donor flows for development assistance, since the social programmes and services that will be put in place as a result of the initiative will need to be sustained over time, if the objectives underlying it are to be successfully met. The critical importance of additionality of ODA resources was thus strongly emphasized.

Global Public Policy Networks

27. In considering a more effective response to global challenges, ACC emphasized the importance not only of enhancing coordination and coherence within the system but also of

forging new strategic alliances and partnerships with key stakeholders, including the private sector. These alliances and partnerships should be based on United Nations values and preserve the independence and uniqueness of the system and its constituent parts. In this context, ACC noted that many existing and new initiatives were under way within the system that were based on the broad approaches underlying the "issue-management" system advocated in the Secretary-General's reform programme, and/or embodied elements underlying the concept of "global public policy network". Thus, many of the ongoing or new initiatives within the system involve efforts, under a lead agency or agencies, to provide for cooperative "issue management" among concerned organizations of the system, in partnership with other concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in the pursuit of priority objectives that cut across the mandates of individual organizations. They also involve efforts at different levels to create "global public policy networks", aimed at linking and engaging all relevant stakeholders — Governments, multilateral organizations, civil society and the private sector — through flexible interactive arrangements, and to promote broad-based coalitions for advocacy, resource mobilization and joint action, in order to advance global objectives.

28. The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) is an excellent example of such broad based coalitions and alliances. GAVI aims at achieving the long standing goal of universal immunization for children. Started in 1999, GAVI is an example of governments, parts of the UN system, foundations and the private sector cooperating together to address a specific problem and need. Currently 30 million children born each year are not receiving the "basic six" immunizations. GAVI brings together key elements involved in immunization campaigns: manufacture of traditional and new vaccines, procurement, maintenance of the cold chain, training of health workers and public education. Partners in the programme include UNICEF, WHO, the World Bank, the Bill and Melinda Gates Children's Vaccine Programme, the Rockefeller Foundation, the pharmaceutical vaccine industry and representative national governments of developed and developing countries. The leadership is provided by the Director-General of WHO for the first two years, followed by the Executive Director of UNICEF.

29. ACC considered that it had an important role to play in engendering support for such initiatives, encouraging exchanges on lessons learned and keeping under review the contribution that they are collectively making to advancing global priority objectives. Stressing the importance of deepening the analysis of cross-sectoral linkages among issues, ACC was also fully conscious of its responsibilities for clarifying how the strategies and objectives of the various entities interact, and how they can best reinforce each other and can best be reinforced through broad-based coalitions and alliances based on shared values.

Interactions with the Private Sector

30. The United Nations system's capacity to have an impact on the process of globalization is increasingly linked to its ability to involve the private sector and civil society in support of its development efforts and intergovernmentally agreed goals and targets. While practically all UN agencies have established modalities for outreach to NGOs, and cooperate closely with many such organizations that share UN family's objectives, interactions with the private sector are at different stages of development both within and among UN agencies. ACC considered that these inter-actions can and should be furthered across the system by developing partnerships which engage the private sector in support of United Nations system objectives.

31. In this context, ACC expressed support for the "Global Compact" initiative of the Secretary-General, launched at the World Economic Forum at Davos in January 1999, to harness the power and reach of corporations to one of the core functions of the United Nations — advocacy of universal values. The initiative was designed to engage the world business community as partners in promoting universal norms, in particular in the areas of human rights, labour standards and environmental practices.

32. With regard to the selection of the areas on which the Secretary-General's initiative was focussed, ACC noted that three considerations had guided it: they are all areas which are directory relevant to the conduct of firms; they all have a strong legal foundation reflected in international agreements, and as such are geared to engaging the private sector in furthering the political consensus among nations and advancing the implementation of universally accepted standards; and they are areas that, if pursued, as is being increasingly advocated in some quarters, through restrictions on international trade and investment rather than through deliberate action of public protectionism threatening the open global economy.

33. It was acknowledged that holding a meaningful dialogue with private business and involving private firms in the work of the United Nations system was a challenging task that required, to be successfully pursued, sustained attention as well as sensitivity to different cultures and possible conflicting interests. It was important that the system pursue complementary approaches. A common understanding of the objectives of and opportunities opened by the Secretary-General's initiative was equally important.

34. ACC agreed that in pursuing a compact or understanding with the private sector, the development dimension of the partnership should be stressed, and other partners, such as different levels of government, including municipal authorities, parliamentarians, as well as trade unions and NGOs, should be actively engaged. The development dimension should draw from, *inter alia*, the programmes of action agreed by the international community at the series of global conferences held in the 1990s.

35. ACC called on its subsidiary machinery to keep under review experiences and practices of ACC member organizations with a view to ensuring systematic exchange
of information, improving understanding of each other's policies and activities, promoting the use of common terminology, and facilitating transparency and consistency
in developing cooperation with the private sector.

4. Follow-up to Conferences

36. In reviewing its contribution to a sustained and integrated follow-up to the UN conferences and summits of the 1990s, and in guiding relevant work within its subsidiary machinery, particularly in support of coordinated action at the country level ACC strongly reaffirmed that poverty eradication and the promotion of equity at all levels should continue to be the overarching goals guiding the system's efforts in support of a more focused global agenda, based on the outcome of these conferences. This orientation has been further reinforced by the focus on poverty that characterized the 1999 substantive session of ECOSOC, and is underlying the Council's intensified dialogue with the Bretton Woods Institutions. ACC trusts that the preparations under way for the 5 year review of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Plan of Action, and the new initiatives to be launched by that process will serve to advance this central objective.

37. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD), the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), the Interagency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (ICWGE), and the ACC Subcommittees on Statistics and Demographic Estimates are serving as the major instruments available to the system and the Council in promoting a system-wide coordinated approach to conference follow-up at both the policy and operational levels, working in close cooperation with the relevant ECOSOC functional commissions. CCPOQ in particular has been tasked with ensuring systematic follow-up at the inter-agency level, the work of the 3 ad hoc task forces that were informally set up by ACC to address broad themes cutting across the outcomes of the conferences.

38. At the national level, a key instrument for promoting a coordinated follow-up to global conferences remain the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) process. At the end of 1999, CCAs had been completed for 37 countries and preparations were on-going for an additional 55. UNDAFs had been completed for 12 countries and preparations were on going for 17.

39. The informal meeting with panels of experts on basic indicators, held by the Council on 10 – 11 May 1999, has made distinct contributions to this overall effort. The need to build national statistical capacity through a collaborative United Nations system effort emerged as a key theme of the meeting. The Council's guidance on this issue is being actively pursued by the system in partnership with other key actors and a separate report will be submitted to ECOSOC on the subject.

40. In considering the review processes underway in relation to individual conferences, ACC noted that the Special Session on ICPD+5 had been an outstanding success because of a steady consensus-building effort and an open and transparent discussion process, and five successive years of progress in implementing the Cairo agreements on population and development issues of concern to all nations. A significant element of the outcome of the Special Session had been the agreement reached on concrete benchmarks to guide further implementation of the Cairo Programme.

41. ACC also considered a range of issues relating to the follow-up to the Beijing Platform of Action. The Ministerial Communiqué adopted by ECOSOC at the High-Level Segment of its 1999 substantive session, which successfully integrated employment, gender issues and poverty eradication goals within a coherent policy framework, was seen by ACC members as a significant contribution to policy development, including to the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. Nevertheless, members of ACC considered that gender concerns are still far from being adequately addressed in macro-economic policy, and agreed that the gender dimensions of globalization are a key area for further study, in order to explore and identify policy interventions that would ensure the most positive outcomes for women from the process of globalization, and to minimize their risks. ACC confirmed its intention to issue a joint statement, as the system's contribution to the special session of the General Assembly which is to review the follow-up to the Beijing Conference and decided that its focus should be on presenting a compelling vision stressing the link between poverty eradication and gender issues.

42. ACC stressed that gender dimensions should be taken fully into account in all operational areas of the work of the UN system. The importance of analyzing the effects of increased participation of women in the labour market on family and societal relations at large was also emphasized. ACC specially acknowledged that in conflict areas, women often become heads of households and primary caretakers of families, and as such, should be specifically targeted by focussed initiatives. Such initiatives should have a community building focus and be based on the recognition of the key contribution of women in helping restore the social fabric in post-conflict situations. Other issues highlighted during ACC discussions were: equal opportunity policies and programmes aimed at reducing occupational segregation by sex; policies allowing women workers to consolidate the benefits of increased paid employment through access to basic worker rights; and policies addressing the needs of women who form the bulk of the informal sector. Special attention was given to the way in which the United Nations system could assist in ensuring that fair value is placed on the "invisible" work of women and is appropriately reflected in national accounts.

43. On representation of women in the secretariats of the system, ACC noted that significant advances have been made towards the goal of 50/50 gender parity -- a goal that has already been met by one of the organizations of the system - the UN Fund for Population Activities. Nevertheless, it was clear to ACC that much remained to be done within the system in terms of retaining women in the secretariats and providing them with adequate career opportunities and conditions of service.

44. Beyond UN global conference and summits, coordinated action is also being pursued as a follow-up to recent conferences convened by various organizations of the UN system. Below are selected examples of such on-going coordination and collaboration initiatives.

45. Established in 1997 by FAO and IFAD with collaboration of WFP, the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food security aims to build partnerships at the country level and to bring together important players in the fight for poverty reduction and food security. This Network is a mechanism for follow-up to the World Food Summit Plan of Action, which stressed the need for coordinated and focused action at the country level. At the country level the Network consists of thematic groups. By October 1999 Thematic Groups had been established in 64 countries, with another 16 in the initial stages of development. The leadership comes from the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team, with involvement of the government, other donors, civil society and the private sector. This broad based membership creates a dynamic framework in which to work on identification and planning of resources, promotion of new projects, information, knowledge and experience sharing, and to ensure coordinated technical support to national efforts. UNDP, IFAD, UNIFEM, UNICEF, the World Bank and bilateral donors are funding rural development and food security activities within the Network. These include development of food security strategies, country nutrition profiles, participatory need assessment and information systems to support the design and implementation of rural development programmes.

46. Education is universally acknowledged as a most valuable tool in the fight against poverty. To more effectively address this need, the international community organized the International Consultative Forum on Education for All (EFA Forum) with participation of UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank, UNFPA, USAID and national governments. The EFA Forum worked during 1998 and 1999 on preparations for the World Education Forum to be held in April 2000, as a follow-up to the 1990 World Conference on Education for All. The goal of the work of the EFA Forum and of the World Education Forum is to expand and improve the

provision of basic education in order to meet the learning needs of children, youth and adults.

47. In relation to new initiatives, mention should be made of the World Conference on Science for the 21st Century held in Hungary in June of 1999. It was jointly organized by UNESCO and the International Council for Science (ICSU), in close collaboration with UN system partners. The Conference focused its attention on science for sustainable development, as recommended by the Commission on Sustainable Development during its sixth session in 1997. UNESCO acted as the inter-agency task manager with the involvement of FAO, WHO, UNCTAD and UNIDO, among others, in the preparation and the definition of the draft "Science Agenda Framework for Action" which was adopted by the Conference.

5. Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

Coordination of United Nations system's activities in Africa

48. The United Nations system's work in Africa has been a long-standing item on the ACC agenda, reflecting the priority that all parts of the system continued to assign to supporting African development.

49. ACC was informed that most of the agencies had brought the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318) to the attention of their governing bodies. Others were in the process of doing so. The inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) and the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) were also seized with the report. Further inter-agency discussions on its follow-up will be targeted at enhancing linkages and complementarity with substantive initiatives being undertaken within the United Nations system on Africa. In addition, ACC reviewed progress achieved by the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and of plans ahead to contribute, through the Initiative, to enhanced inter-agency coordination in support of regional cooperation and development, including the further implementation of relevant recommendations in the Secretary-General's report.

50. In his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General also raised the issue of the multitude of international initiatives in Africa. This was one of the main issues addressed at the first inter-agency meeting for the Africa region held in Nairobi in March 1999, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Secretary-General pursuant to a recommendation of the Economic and Social Council. The meeting reviewed existing inter-agency mechanisms and sought to devise arrangements that would enhance the coherence of the United Nations system's activities without creating additional structures for coordination. As many United Nations system activities in Africa fell within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative which is serving as the implementation arm of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the meeting concluded that other relevant United Nations system activities could also be brought under that "umbrella".

51. ACC endorsed the broad thrust of recommendations before it, which aimed to promote more collaborative actions, reinforce synergies, avoid duplication and overlap and generally bring about greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in Africa, with the Steering Committee on the Special Initiative providing a common framework for overseeing the overall effort.

52. General support was also expressed for the thrust of other recommendations stressing the importance of:

- The United Nations system's work in Africa continuing to reflect Africa's own vision and priorities;
- Information sharing and communication, particularly through electronic means, on initiatives in Africa, both as a requirement to ensure overall United Nations system effectiveness and vis-à-vis development partners outside of the United Nations system;
- Effective and non-duplicative ways of monitoring reporting on United Nations system development activities in Africa, including identifying best practices, drawing lessons from intercountry experiences and evaluating major implementation constraints.

53. Many of these issues were further pursued at the coordination segment of the 1999 session of ECOSOC. Its agreed conclusions are being actively followed up within the system.

Aid Flows for Africa Development

54. During discussions at the thirty-ninth session of CPC, references were made to the issue of resource flows to Africa and support was

expressed for the ACC appeal to the international community that there should be no lessening of support for African development. Africa's need for additional resources remains today as important and urgent as in December 1991 when the General Assembly approved the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa for the 1990's. Indeed, the need and urgency are greater now than they were then. Gross domestic investment in Africa has remained very low. Gross domestic savings have been consistently declining. Trends in investment rates are similar.

55. Although Africa's share in total ODA remained the largest among recipient regions, African countries have continued to experience decline in net ODA from both DAC and non-DAC countries. ODA share of GDP has also continued to decline in almost all African countries.

56. While sectoral distribution of ODA over the years has been changing, the trend favoring social-sector investment is apparent. The multilateral donors, especially the World Bank Group, are also shifting their assistance away from large physical infrastructure projects to social sector that focuses on human resource development and poverty alleviation.

57. External debt also constitutes an element of resource flow. Payment for debt servicing represents a negative flow of resources. Africa's debt servicing difficulties have long been recognized. As discussed earlier, a number of debt relief initiatives have been taken to tackle the issue of external debt. In 1996, the IMF and World Bank launched a debt initiative for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) with the objective of bringing debt burdens to "sustainable" levels. In September 1999, the Development and Interim Committee endorsed – subject to availability of funding- the enhancements to the HIPC Initiative framework to provide deeper, faster, and broader debt relief for countries pursuing sound policies and committed to reform.

58. The international community has also provided assistance to debtor countries in the restructuring of their debt to commercial banks. This has occurred largely through buy-backs supported by the World Bank and the IMF and has benefited low and medium income countries in the region.

59. While private flows, into developing countries have increased dramatically in resent years, these have in general bypassed African countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, the flows are concentrated in a few countries, with South Africa being the largest recipient. Private loans which were prominent for Africa in the 70's and 80's, have virtually ceased now, being slightly negative to slightly positive in some countries, since African countries have yet to restore normal credit relations with the financial markets and gain access to credit. FDI into Africa has increased modestly and encouragingly despite the fact that it is well below the requirement to fill the savings investment gap. FDI flows to sub-Saharan Africa are highly concentrated in a few countries.

60. ACC trusts the forthcoming review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) as well as the forthcoming conference on LDCs, most of which are in Africa, will provide the opportunity for giving renewed attention to aid flows to Africa and agree on measures for their enhancement.

6. HIV/AIDS

61. Among the key issues ACC considered in 1999 was the devastating impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic particularly in Africa where it is growing into a major development crisis. Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounted for 9 out of 10 new infections in 1998. HIV/AIDS epidemic, while being a major health concern, affects all sectors of the economy and society – and thus is of major relevance to all organizations represented in ACC.

62. ACC expressed strong support for the decision of UNAIDS, together with its co-sponsors, the UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO, and the World Bank, to intensify its action in Africa, in partnership with African governments, regional bodies, bilateral development agencies, multilateral organizations, the private sector, the Global Business Council on AIDS and all concerned NGOs. An important expression of this commitment is the International Partnership against AIDS in Africa (IPAA), launched in 1999. The IPAA is working to fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic through stronger national programmes backed by four main lines of action: encouraging visible and sustainable political support, helping to develop nationally-negotiated joint plans of action, increasing financial resources and strengthening national and regional technical capacity.

63. ACC also took up the issue of United Nations staff and dependants living with HIV/AIDS and requested CCAQ to give special consideration to the joint actions needed and to report to it on any policy-level considerations requiring its attention.

7. Administrative Questions

64. ACC's work in this area has continued to focus on reinforcing unity in the common system and its adaptation and responsiveness to new requirements considered a number of proposed new arrangements to this end. It is in this context that ACC reaffirmed its strong support for a proposed review by the General Assembly of the functioning of the International Civil Service Commission, stressing the need for ICSC to it remain an independent and impartial technical body devoted to safeguarding and strengthening the international civil service and to function in a way to maximize its contribution to these two key objectives. ACC also stressed the need for the administration of justice and the functioning of the Administrative Tribunals to be conducive to the effective management of human resources within the system considered a number of proposed new arrangements to this end. Another issue considered by ACC (CCAQ High-level meeting) was the preparedness of the UN system to deal with potential problems arising from the Y2K issue. ACC adopted a statement on the subject.

United Nations Staff Security and Safety

65. In a decision adopted at its Fall Session, ACC reiterated the need for a comprehensive approach to be implemented to ensure the security and safety of staff, including local staff in all duty stations, and stressed that such an approach required concerted action by Member States and the Secretariats alike, at both Headquarters and the field, at the political, legal, and institutional levels. It also recalled that designated officials and security management teams will be held individually and collectively responsible and accountable for ensuring the safety and security of staff and for taking all necessary measures to that end. In the same decision ACC called the attention of governments to their primary responsibility for ensuring the security and safety of all UN system staff and their accountability for any acts committed in their territories affecting the security and safety of staff.

8. Assistance to countries invoking Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations

66. The Committee for Programme and Coordination, in paragraph 565 of its report on the work of its thirty-ninth session (A/54/16), took note of the overview report's treatment of Article 50 of the Charter concerning the impact of sanctions on third-party States and reiterated the need for it to be kept informed of activities and progress in this respect. Information on the measures taken by the United Nations system to provide assistance to third States affected by the implementation of sanctions imposed on Iraq and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was first contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the question of special economic problems of States as a result of sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (A/48/573-S/26705), and thereafter in the annual overview reports of ACC. In addition, economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was the subject of a series of five reports of the Secretary-General for the General Assembly (A/49/356, A/50/423, A/51/356, A/52/535 and A/54/534).

67. The General Assembly, in its resolution 54/96 G of 15 December 1999, took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 52/169 H of 16 December 1997 (A/54/534) and the conclusions contained therein, and welcomed the support already provided by the international community, in particular by the European Union and other donors, to the affected States to assist them in coping with their special economic problems during the transition period following the lifting of the sanctions pursuant to Security Council resolution 1074 (1996) of 1 October 1996, as well as in the process of economic adjustment following the developments in the Balkans. In the same resolution, the Assembly expressed concern at the special economic problems confronting the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, in particular their impact on regional trade and economic relations and on navigation along the Danube and on the Adriatic Sea, and invited all States and relevant international organizations, both within and outside the United Nations system, in particular the international financial institutions, to continue to take into account the special needs and situations of the affected States in providing support and assistance to their efforts for economic recovery, structural adjustment and development. The Secretary-General was requested to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the implementation of the resolution.

68. Further, the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/107 of 9 December 1999, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General (A/53/312) containing a summary of the deliberations and main findings of the ad hoc expert group meeting on developing a methodology for assessing the consequences incurred by third States as a result of preventive or enforcement measures and on exploring innovative and practical measures of international assistance to the affected third States, and invited States and relevant international organizations within and outside the United Nations system which have not yet done so to provide their views regarding the report of the ad hoc expert group meeting. It also requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the competent units within the Secretariat develop the adequate capacity and appropriate modalities, technical procedures and guidelines in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 50/51, 51/208, 52/162 and 53/107, and to present to the Assembly his views on the deliberations and main findings, including the recommendations, of the ad hoc expert group on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, taking into account the views of States, the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions and other international organizations.

69. The same resolution reaffirmed the important role of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Committee for Programme and Coordination in mobilizing and monitoring, as appropriate, the economic assistance efforts by the international community and the United Nations system to States confronted with special economic problems arising from the carrying out of preventive or enforcement measures imposed by the Security Council and, as appropriate, in identifying solutions to the special economic problems of those States. The Assembly took note of the decision of the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1999/59 of 30 July 1999, to continue consideration of the question of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions, and decided to transmit the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations related to assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions (A/54/383 and Add.1) to the Council at its substantive session of 2000. It invited the organizations of the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional organizations and Member States to address more specifically and directly, where appropriate, special economic problems of third States affected by sanctions imposed under Chapter VII of the Charter and, for this purpose, to consider improving procedures for consultations to maintain a constructive dialogue with such States, including through regular and frequent meetings as well as, where appropriate, special meetings between the affected third States and the donor community, with the participation of United Nations agencies and other international organizations. The Secretary-General will submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

9. Elements of the programme of work of ACC for 2000

70. In 2000, ACC will continue to address major issues of system-wide importance requiring coordinated responses from the United Nations system. As in 1999, ACC will organize its work programme around a main theme - the demands placed on national and international systems by the new global environment. Within this broad framework, ACC will examine four sets of issues: (i) the international trading system and the trade/environment/labour/human rights nexus in the aftermath of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Seattle and UNCTAD X; (ii) the role of information technology in a knowledge-based economy; (iii) health and other social implications of globalization; and (iv) financing for development. ACC intends to pursue the first two sets of issues at its first regular session of 2000, and the latter two at its second regular session. In continuing its consideration of the main theme, ACC will endeavour to achieve a deeper understanding of the scope and evolving nature of globalization and of the resulting challenges for the system.

71. As part of ongoing reflections to strengthen the capacity of the system to respond to the challenges of the new global environment and within the overall context of system-wide reform, ACC will consider concrete measures to enhance ACC support to intergovernmental bodies, deepen the unity of purpose within the system and streamline the ACC subsidiary machinery as well as increasing the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of secretariat support.

72. Against the backdrop of the growing HIV/AIDS epidemic, ACC will continue its consideration of this key system-wide priority issue. The focus will be on concerted and coordinated efforts to deal with the epidemic, drawing upon the report and recommendations from UNAIDS, and highlighting measures to address the issue of UN staff and dependants living with this affliction.

73. In the light of mounting attacks and threats against UN system personnel, ACC will continue devote urgent attention to the issue of staff security and safety. Priority consideration will be given to finding a stable and predictable source of funding for staff security, further measures to enhance staff security in the field and at headquarters and promoting ratification of relevant international conventions by Member States.

74. ACC will continue to address the integrated and coordinated follow-up to global conferences and summits. It will keep under review the preparations for the Millennium Summit, the General Assembly special sessions on Beijing + 5 and the Social Summit + 5 as well as the ECOSOC assessment of the progress made by the UN system in the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up to major UN conferences and summits. In addition, ACC will consider inter-agency collaboration in ensuring the success of forthcoming world conferences, including the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, and effective follow up to the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

75. In formulating its programme of work for the year 2000, ACC seeks to arrive at a shared understanding of the challenges that lie ahead for the system and to address those challenges with a sense of common purpose. Its aim is to strengthen partnerships within the system and promote mutually supportive and complementary actions in the light of the globalized environment and to keep under review the progress made by the system towards broadening and deepening collective endeavours to address those challenges.